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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [EAID](#) [IT](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN/ITALY: AMBASSADOR WOOD URGES INCREASED
ITALIAN POLICE TRAINING AND MILITARY EFFORTS

REF: A. STATE 32155

[1](#)B. ROME DAILY REPORT

[1](#)C. 4/17/08

Classified By: Acting Political Minister-Counselor Jonathan Cohen for R
easons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. During an April 14-16 visit to Rome, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan William Wood praised Italian civilian and military efforts in Afghanistan while encouraging a vigilant military posture in Regional Command-West and urging greater involvement in police training activities. He reiterated the U.S. request for Carabinieri police trainers to embed with U.S. Marines deploying to Helmand and Farah provinces and urged a robust Italian pledging effort at the Paris International Support Conference on Afghanistan (Ref A). Italian officials told Wood that the newly elected center-right coalition is likely to strengthen Italy's commitment to Afghanistan. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Wood discussed Afghanistan in separate meetings April 14-16 with Italian Chief of Defense Gen. Camporini, MFA Chief of Cabinet Amb. Nelli Feroci, MFA Special Envoy for Afghanistan Mercuri, Afghan Ambassador to Italy Maroofi and a group of Italian journalists. Wood and Ambassador Spogli urged General Camporini to support the U.S. request for at least 18 Carabinieri police trainers to embed with U.S. Marines deploying to Farah and Helmand Provinces in May. He stressed that the Carabinieri have unique capabilities and their deployment would act as a force multiplier by freeing up U.S. military trainers and strengthening bonds of trust between the Afghan National Police and local populations. Camporini said that the new Italian government (that will take office in May) would likely be more flexible in its Afghan commitments. "If the new government decides to find more money (for Italian military missions abroad), we can do more." Camporini pledged to work on an answer to the U.S. request, that he believed would come "in a few weeks;" i.e. when a new government was in power. Camporini will accompany outgoing MOD Parisi on a visit to Italian troops in Afghanistan on April 20.

[1](#)3. (C) In a meeting with MFA Chief of Cabinet Ferdinando Nelli Feroci (soon to become Italian PermRep to the EU) and MFA Special Envoy for Afghanistan Sergio Mercuri, Wood stressed the need to strengthen the EU Police Training Mission (EUPOL), which has been slow to get off the ground. Nelli Feroci said that the outgoing Prodi government had difficulty in increasing its Afghanistan commitments in the

face of far left opposition, but that the next government should encounter far fewer political obstacles in this regard. Nelli Feroci asked for U.S. support for Italy's candidates for the position of NATO Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) in Afghanistan, deputy National Security Adviser Gentilini and former Italian Ambassador to Armenia Clemente, and said that Italy may offer its Ambassador to Afghanistan, Ettore Sequi, as a candidate for the position of EU High Representative for Afghanistan when Sequi's term expires in summer 2008.

¶4. (C) Wood also delivered to Mercuri the points in Ref A calling for robust pledges at the upcoming International Support Conference on Afghanistan in Paris, and thanked Italy for its ongoing justice reform work in the wake of the 2007 Rome Rule of Law Conference. Mercuri said that French conference organizer Amb. Duquesne had been in Italy recently to discuss the conference and that the MFA was still in the process of planning its delegation and pledging commitment.

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador Wood told journalists at a lunch hosted by Ambassador Spogli that the U.S. appreciated Italian military and civilian commitments to Afghanistan. He said that the ISAF Strategic Vision Statement adopted at the Bucharest Summit was an important step forward, and thanked Italy for its commitment of three additional Operational Mentor and Liason Teams (OMLTs). He observed that the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR) has never been filled, that all allies need to do more, and encouraged Italy to take a proactive stance against the insurgency in its areas of command, particularly RC-West, where drug trafficking and insurgent activity is on the rise.

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¶6. (SBU) Wood said that 2007 had been a good year in Afghanistan in all areas except counternarcotics. The Taliban had been defeated on the battlefield and were forced to resort to IEDs and other insurgency tactics as a result. Afghanistan showed the fastest economic growth rate in South Asia, thousands of girls were being schooled, infant mortality had continued to drop and 80 per cent of the population now had access to health care, compared to 8 per cent in 2001. Opium cultivation had increased in the South and West, particularly in Helmand province, where lack of security contributed to the growing alliance between insurgents, corrupt officials and large-scale opium poppy cultivators. The U.S. is focusing its attention on Helmand by supporting the newly appointed governor and applying a comprehensive counternarcotics approach (interdiction, development assistance, alternative livelihoods, and incentives) that has contributed to a sharp drop in opium production in the eastern provinces.

¶7. (C) Comment: Ambassador Wood's visit, coming on the heels of Berlusconi's center-right election victory, provided an opportunity to reiterate U.S. goals to Italian officials preparing for what is expected to be a more robust Italian approach to Afghanistan. Statements by Berlusconi aides on the margins of a press conference on April 17 (Ref B) hint at a willingness to consider increasing troop levels and easing Italian geographic caveats that prevent Italian troops from operating outside of RC-West and RC-Capital.

¶8. (U) Ambassador Wood did not have a chance to clear this cable before he left.
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